

Call Splashing

What Is "Call Splashing"?

When you place a call from a public phone (a payphone, hotel, or airport phone, for example), your call may be routed to a distant call center before being "handed off" to your chosen long distance carrier. Your preferred long distance carrier might then, either unintentionally or intentionally, bill you as if your call originated from the distant call center, rather than from your actual location. As a result, you may be charged higher long distance rates for the call than what you expected. This is called "call splashing," and it may be in violation of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules.

Is Call Splashing Legal?

A carrier is permitted to base charges on an artificial point of origination if the caller:

- requests to be transferred to a different carrier's operator; or
- is informed (before incurring any charges) that the call may be billed as if it originated somewhere other than where the caller is calling from and he/she consents to the transfer.

Avoid Being "Splashed"

To help avoid call splashing, listen carefully to the telephone operator and don't consent to any call transfers unless you understand what the operator is asking. Carefully read your phone bill to ensure the origination and destination locations of your long distance phone calls are correct. If your phone call has been billed without your consent as if the call originated from a distant call center, and the rate is higher than you anticipated, complain to your preferred long distance carrier so you can receive the correct billing rate. You can also file an informal complaint with the FCC.

Filing a Complaint with the FCC

You can file a complaint by either e-mail (fccinfo@fcc.gov), the Internet, telephone 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY or mail.



Your complaint letter should include:

- name, address, and telephone number where you can be reached during the business day;
- the telephone number involved with the complaint;
- as much specific information about the complaint as possible;
- a description of the steps taken by you to resolve the complaint yourself;
- the names and telephone numbers of the company employees that you talked with in an effort to resolve the complaint, and the dates that you talked with these employees;
- copies of bills listing the disputed charges (circle the disputed charges on the copy of the bill); and
- the relief that is being requested (such as adjustment of charges).

If mailing in a complaint, send it to:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaint Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

For general information, you may contact the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau in the following ways:

Via Internet at www.fcc.gov/cgb
Consumer Center, Voice: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) and
TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)

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For this or any other consumer publication in an alternative format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on www.fcc.gov/cgb/emailservice.html.

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